

# Draft IWWC Definitions

**“Cumulative Impact”** is the impact on the environment that results from the incremental impact of the action when added to the other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions.

**“Headwaters”** are the uppermost reaches of a stream. Headwaters are composed of numerous small tributaries and seepages which coalesce into larger tributaries, and are the source of all rivers and streams.

*COMMENTARY: Headwaters are considered among the most sensitive of riparian resources. Damage to headwaters is carried downstream and in certain instances through the entire riparian system.*

**“Upland Review Area”** is a defined area of land outside of but adjacent to inland wetlands and watercourses in which the Commission or its agent has the authority to review, but not necessarily prohibit, activities.

**"Watercourses"** means rivers, streams, brooks, waterways, lakes, ponds, marshes, swamps, bogs, and all other bodies of water, natural or artificial, vernal or intermittent, public or private, which are contained within, flow through or border upon the Town or any portion thereof not regulated pursuant to sections 22a-28 through 22a-35, inclusive, of the Connecticut General Statutes.

**\*Statutory/Model Regulation Definition**

**“Calcareous Fens”** are a type of watercourse occurring at the intersection of circumneutral (calcareous) bedrock and glacial till deposits. Calcareous fens are located on the upper slopes (edges) of larger wetlands, where they are fed by cold groundwater breaking out of glacial terraces coalescing into rivulets. The steady seepage of clean, cold water creates a condition that supports a unique assemblage of plants and animals.

*COMMENTARY: Calcareous fens and many of the specialized species that inhabit them are quite rare. Salisbury has several prime examples of sloping calcareous fens and a single example of the much rarer ombrotrophic fen which occurs on or adjacent to a bog mat in West Twin Lake.*

**“High-Gradient Coldwater Streams”** are headwaters usually originating from high elevation wetlands. They receive not only surface water, but also large amounts of subterranean seepage that break out at various fissures in the bedrock, adding cold water to these streams as they plunge over steep cliffs and boulders.

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*COMMENTARY: High gradient cold-water streams occurring above the 800' elevation are critical riparian resources in Salisbury and have their source on the Taconic Uplift (Riga Plateau). The most familiar of these is Sage's Ravine on the Connecticut-Massachusetts state line.*

**“Intermittent Watercourses”** shall be delineated by a defined permanent channel and bank and the occurrence of two or more of the following characteristics: (A) Evidence of scour or deposits of recent alluvium or detritus, (B) the presence of standing or flowing water for a duration longer than a particular storm incident, and (C) the presence of hydrophytic vegetation.

\*Statutory definition

*COMMENTARY: Intermittent watercourses do not flow year-round.*

**“Vernal Pools”** are seasonally inundated inland wetlands that are determined by physical site characteristics and the presence of indicator/obligate species. If a vernal pool does not support indicator species, it is treated as a wetland.

*COMMENTARY: Planning land-uses surrounding vernal pools is a multi-step, data-driven review process. First, the significance of the biological value of a pool must be established. This is best determined in March and April. Second, if there is significant biological value, the envelope and critical terrestrial habitat are analyzed.*

*Classic Vernal Pools are temporary or semi-permanent depressional wetlands. As they usually lack fish, they are prime breeding habitats for a group of amphibians, termed vernal pool indicator/obligate species that have evolved to exploit the absence of competition in these habitats.*

*Cryptic Vernal Pools are seasonally flooded areas occurring in larger wetlands including riparian floodplains. While more difficult to detect and map than classic vernal pools, cryptic pools make up the majority of vernal pools. Because they may be connected to riparian systems fish occasionally occur in these pools.*

**“Wetlands”** means land, including submerged land as defined in this section, not regulated pursuant to sections 22a-28 through 22a-35, inclusive, of the Connecticut General Statutes, which consists of any of the soil types designated

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as poorly drained, very poorly drained, alluvial and floodplain by the National Cooperative Soils Survey, as it may be amended from time to time, of the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Such areas may include filled, graded, or excavated sites which possess an aquic (saturated) soil moisture regime as defined by the USDA Cooperative Soil Survey.

## \*Statutory/Model Regulation Definition

*COMMENTARY: Generally, the word “wetland” conjures up the classic image of a swamp or bog, but wetlands can take many forms, some of which are dry for a substantial portion of the year. In fact, some property including surface-dry woodlands, meadows, and even lawns are actually wetlands despite being wet for only part of the year. Soils that are identified as poorly drained, very poorly drained, alluvial or floodplain are wetland soils.*

*In Connecticut, wetlands are identified by features of the first 18 to 24 inches of soil, thus what appears at the surface does not determine the presence or absence of a wetland. Wetland soils are defined in the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act by soil drainage class and landscape position. Because wetlands are determined by soil type and are not always easily identified by sight, a registered soil scientist must be consulted to conduct a site-specific analysis and determine whether wetlands are present.*

*Poorly drained soils occur where the water table is at or just below the ground surface, usually from late fall to early spring. The land where poorly drained soils occur is nearly level or gently sloping. Many of our red maple swamps are on these soils.*

*Very poorly drained soils generally occur on level land or in depressions. In these areas, the water table lies at or above the surface during most of the growing season. Most of our marshes and bogs are on these soils.*

*Alluvial and floodplain soils occur along watercourses occupying nearly all level areas subject to periodic flooding. These soils are formed when material is deposited by flowing water. Such material can be composed of clay, silt, sand or gravel. Alluvial and floodplain soils range from excessively drained to very poorly drained.*

*From a review of maps and records, the Land Use Office may be able to advise you if wetlands exist on your property or in the vicinity, and if a wetlands delineation by a soils scientist will be required to obtain a permit or ruling from the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission or its agent for proposed activities.*

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**“Wetlands and Watercourses Buffer Area”** is an area of undisturbed vegetation bordering a wetland or watercourse either naturally occurring, or planted as mitigation. The buffer may be composed of a combination of trees, woody vegetation (shrubs, bushes, brush), and herbaceous vegetation.

*COMMENTARY: Wetlands and Watercourses Buffer Areas mitigate the impacts of impervious surfaces by slowing runoff, protect shorelines from erosion, aid in flood control, and filter or trap pollutants. They also provide habitat and corridors for wildlife, as well as shading waters for fisheries enhancement. Wetlands and Watercourses Buffer are not synonymous with an Upland Review Area.*

Fringing Wetland – a swamp or marsh broadly connected to a larger waterbody or floodplain at the same elevation as that waterbody